Education
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Arts Education Renewal: A Message from the Minister

The potential for arts education renewal in Manitoba to energize and transform student learning is very real and very exciting. Realizing this potential is a priority of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth.

The development of new arts curricula in dance, drama, music, and visual arts is an essential step toward ensuring that all students have opportunities to learn in, about, and through the arts. In the process of providing quality arts programming, our educational system becomes better able to educate the "whole person" by complementing, providing balance to, and enriching traditional academic subjects. Arts education provides further dimensions to the notion of the "healthy child," supporting children's intellectual, physical, emotional, social, aesthetic, and creative development in profound and unique ways. Through the development of artistic literacies, students become better equipped to think, feel, communicate, and adapt in a rapidly changing world.

I am pleased to highlight the following Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth initiatives:

- new Manitoba arts education curriculum frameworks on our website at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/arts/>:
  - Kindergarten to Grade 4 Dance
  - Kindergarten to Grade 4 Drama
  - Kindergarten to Grade 6 Music
  - Kindergarten to Grade 4 Visual Arts
- an orientation process in which the new arts education frameworks are made available to educators in all regions of Manitoba
- a planning/voluntary implementation phase, during which time Manitoba educators are invited to study, plan, and/or implement the new arts education frameworks
- a multi-stage research project exploring arts education in Manitoba schools and potential implementation models including integrated/independent instructional models, and models that facilitate generalist/specialist collaboration, educator/artist partnerships, and so on
- ongoing processes to finalize new arts education frameworks in all four disciplines up to Grade 8 and to extend them through to Grade 12 in a future phase
- a user-friendly electronic format for new arts curricula that can facilitate the inclusion of images, sound, and video as well as text-based information to provide various supports to implementation, such as exemplars, demonstrations, and links to new resources
- a process to review and identify current teaching and learning resources to support the new arts education frameworks

The implementation of Manitoba's new Arts Education curricula will provide new opportunities as well as new challenges. While experience and access to arts resources can vary greatly among schools, divisions, and regions of our province, the potential benefits for our citizens, communities, and for the social and economic development of our province are far-reaching.

Honourable Peter Bjornson
Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth

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The Middle Years Initiative

The Middle Years Initiative is a result of increased understanding of issues in Middle Years education. Because we know more about the learners and the strategies that support learning than ever before, it has been necessary to review our beliefs and practices in Middle Years education.

Current research consistently points out that early adolescence is a critical period full of possibilities for increased engagement and achievement but also full of risks of disengagement and underachievement. Emerging research on brain development during the early stages of adolescence, on student engagement with school, and on effective curricular, assessment, and instructional strategies in the Middle Years makes it possible to meet the developmental needs of these learners more effectively.

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth is already supporting Middle Years education in various ways: a new focus on career awareness (in pilot projects such as *The Real Game—Next Generation*), Safe and Caring Schools, Literacy with ICT, Scientists in the Classroom, the Middle Years Assessment Policy, and the Middle Years Experiential Grant, to name only a few.

The Middle Years must be a priority if we wish to expand and consolidate learners' academic success.

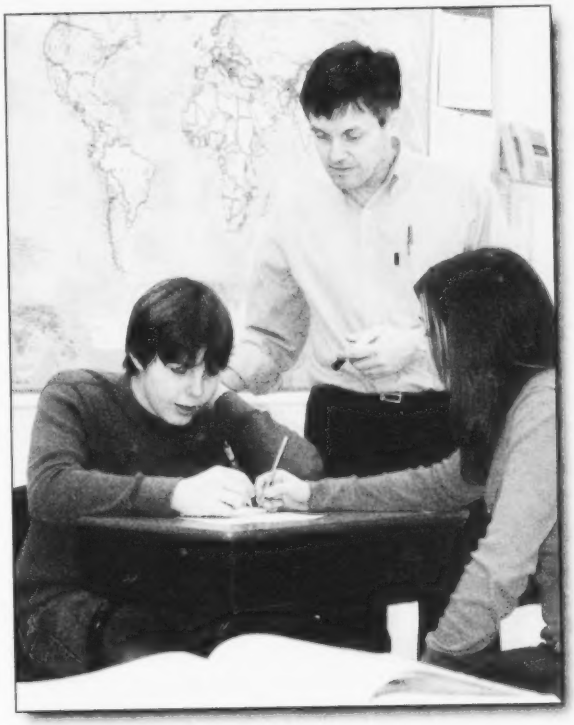
As a result of consultation with the field and a review of the current research, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth is expanding our activities in Middle Years in partnership with educational stakeholders/professional organizations to address the needs of all Middle Years students.

The Department has recently released a research summary for Middle Years educators outlining what the current research tells us about

- the characteristics and needs of learners at this stage of their development
- the aspects of curriculum, assessment, and instruction that need to be considered in quality Middle Years programming
- the factors that foster a supportive learning environment for Middle Years students
- how sustaining or regaining student engagement with school is crucial to the present and future success of Middle Years students

The Department will begin to work with schools with Middle Years learners to examine how they presently support their Middle Years students and teachers. The research summary will be a resource for schools as they begin this review process. After reflecting on their current practices, schools will set specific Middle Years goals, as part of their regular school planning process. The Department does not intend to take "a one-size-fits-all" approach but rather to allow schools to identify what strategies and focuses make sense in their situations to best serve their learners.

Professional learning opportunities will be offered by the Department to provide leadership and to support the vision of quality Middle Years programming. In the fall of 2008, the Department, in conjunction with Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, will hold a symposium on Engagement in the Middle Years.



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Resources will also be developed in response to the needs identified by educators. Flexible delivery systems such as learning modules and webcasts are also planned to make professional learning more accessible and responsive.

The Middle Years must be a priority if we wish to expand and consolidate learners' academic success, engage them fully in school, have them develop positive and safe attitudes and behaviours, and ensure that they make successful transitions to high school.

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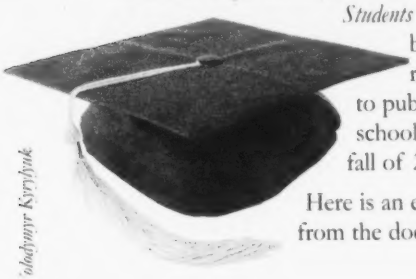
2008-03617/

New Guide to Graduation Requirements

Watch for *Focus on the Future: A Parent and Student Guide to Senior Years Graduation Requirements*, a new guide that Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth has developed to inform students and parents about the graduation requirements for Manitoba Senior Years students.

This guide provides parents and students with a planning tool that can be used throughout the Senior Years. It replaces *A Time to Know Which Direction to Go: The Senior Years—A Record of Graduation Requirements for Parents and Students* and will be released to public schools in the fall of 2007.



Here is an excerpt from the document.

Parents and students should be aware that the graduation requirements for provincial Senior Years diplomas are increasing from 28 credits in the 2007–2008 school year to 30 credits in the 2009–2010 school year.

Students seeking to graduate in

- 2007–08 school year require a minimum of 28 credits
- 2008–09 school year require a minimum of 29 credits
- 2009–10 and beyond require a minimum of 30 credits

This increase is a result of the recent addition of one compulsory physical education/health education (PE/HE) credit at each of the Grade 11 and Grade 12 levels.

Parents, school counsellors, teachers, and administrators play an important role in helping students choose the direction of their Senior Years programming. In addition to using this guide, students and parents are encouraged to contact their school counsellors for more information on course descriptions and the choices available in their schools and school divisions.

The Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth graduation requirements can be found at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/policy/grad_require.html>.

Working together, we can help students choose a direction and chart a course.

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Curriculum Update

Development

Several projects are underway in the 2007–2008 school year to revise or develop new curricula for the Kindergarten to Grade 12 English Program:

- Grades 9 and 10 English as an Additional Language (EAL) courses
- Grades 10 and 11 Mathematics

Implementation

Implementation is underway in the curricular areas identified in the chart to the right.

Important Notes:

- 40G science curricula were discontinued as of June 2007.
- As part of the transition to ICT: Senior Years, 2007–2008 will be the last school year that schools may offer the following courses: Introductory Keyboarding (15G), Advanced Keyboarding (25G), Computer Applications and Technology (20S), Software Applications (30S), Word Processing (30G), and Advanced Word Processing (45S).

Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment Branch will provide workshops for curriculum implementation and related professional learning during 2007–2008. Information about regional workshops will be posted on the workshop registration system at <www2.edu.gov.mb.ca/yag/>.

For a list of compulsory curricula and stock numbers for ordering from the Manitoba Text Book Bureau, refer to <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/csai.html>.

Implementation Timelines

Curriculum	Voluntary	System-Wide
Compulsory		
Social Studies: 5–10		2007–2008
Social Studies: 11	2008–2009	2009–2010
Arts Education: K–4	2007–2009	2009–2010
* Arts Education: 5–8	2008–2010	2010–2011
Mathematics: K–8	2007–2008	2008–2009
† Mathematics: 9	2007–2009	2009–2010
Physical Education/Health Education: 11–12	2007–2008	2008–2009
Optional		
Social Studies: 12	TBA	TBA
Interdisciplinary Topics in Science: 12	2007–2008	2008–2009
Biology: 11	2006–2007	2007–2008
Biology: 12	2007–2008	2008–2009
Chemistry: 12	2007–2008	2008–2009
Aboriginal Languages: K–12	2006–2008	2008–2009
Aboriginal Studies: 12	2006–2008	2008–2009
Family Studies: Senior Years		2007–2008
Industrial Arts: Senior Years	2006–2008	2009–2010
English as an Additional Language: K–12	2006–2008	2008–2009
English Language Arts: EAL for Academic Success: 12		2007–2008
Career Development: 9–10		2007–2008
Career Development: 11–12	2007–2008	2008–2009
Information and Communication Technology: Senior Years	2006–2008	2008–2009
Literacy, Academics, and Language: 9	2007–2008	2008–2009
Hebrew: K–6	2007–2009	2010–2011

** Orientation drafts for Grades 5–8 Arts will be available in 2007–2008.*

† For tentative timelines for implementation of Grades 10–12 Mathematics curricula, visit <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/math/>.

Courses for Independent Learners

Manitoba students of various ages and in a variety of circumstances have the opportunity to take control of their learning. The Independent Study Option (ISO) of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth offers a wide range of courses including those required for high school graduation, as well as optional courses such as power mechanics, agriculture, and law, to name only a few.

ISO Learners

ISO learners are a diverse group, ranging from children being home-schooled to teenagers in high school to adults in the workforce. Whatever their situation, these students take ISO courses so that they can learn with some kind of flexibility, that is, flexibility in terms of what, when, where, and/or with whom they study. This can benefit them in a number of ways, including allowing them to

- take courses not offered at their high school or Adult Learning Centre
- take courses that they cannot take in school because of timetable conflicts
- earn Manitoba credits while out of the province or being home-schooled
- register for a course at any time during the school year
- earn the few remaining credits that they need to graduate without attending school
- complete the requirements for either a Senior Year diploma or post-secondary admission while taking care of other commitments, such as family and work

Support for Independent Learners

Learners are most likely to successfully complete their courses if they are highly motivated and organized, work well independently, and communicate with their tutor/marker. Independent study is by its very nature challenging: to a large extent, instruction is given in writing, requiring more reading than the average classroom-based course, and the daily discussion and group interaction of a typical classroom are difficult to achieve.

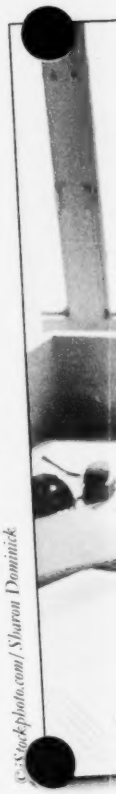
To help learners to overcome these challenges, tutor/markers (certified, experienced educators) provide one-to-one support to learners and assess their learning. All tutor/markers have toll-free phone numbers, and most can be contacted through email. Besides their tutor/markers, learners can also be assisted by family members, community members, and/or peers. If they are attending school, they may also be assisted by their teachers.

Parents, teachers, and/or other adults can help learners to stay on schedule and to complete assignments and exams in good time. Some courses contain timetables, giving suggested completion dates for the different parts of the course.

In order to make their experience as flexible and accessible as possible, learners are given one year to complete courses. Registration fees vary but are generally considered affordable. To complete most courses, learners need to study the lesson materials, complete and send assignments to their tutor/markers, and when applicable, complete their exams under supervision.

Course Development and Revision

ISO courses are developed with the diversity of learners and the challenges of independent study in mind. Courses are written and revised by classroom teachers under the supervision of departmental personnel. As courses are developed, the Department works with teachers in the field and other experts to ensure that best practices and the Manitoba curriculum are implemented, often in very innovative ways. To support learners of different backgrounds, supplemental material and resources are built into the course packages. Learning experiences using technology, such as video and audio



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New Courses

ISO has recently released the following five new or significantly revised courses:

- Grade 9 Art (10G) is a major revision of the course.
- Grade 9 Home Economics (10G) is a completely new course.
- Grade 9 Physical Education/Health Education (10F) is another completely new course and the first in this subject area.
- Grade 12 Accounting Systems (40S) is another completely new course. Unlike the previous version, learners will not have to purchase a textbook or workbooks.
- Grade 12 Pre-Calculus Mathematics (40S) is a major revision of the course, with more examples and instruction than the previous version.

Upcoming Courses

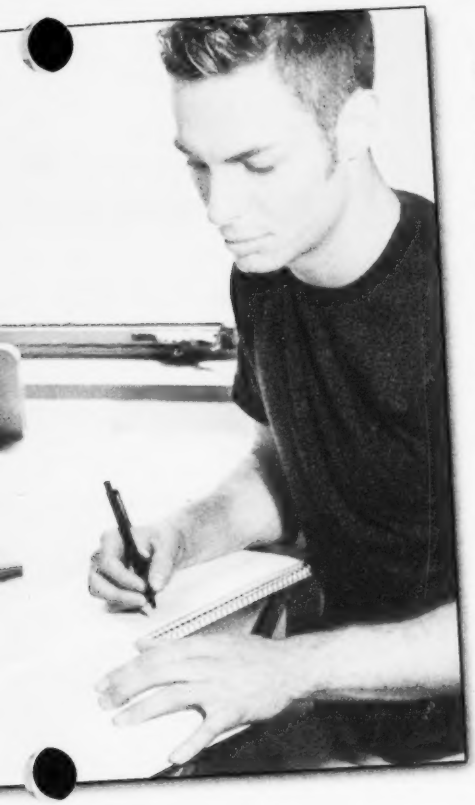
Several courses are currently under development and may be released during the 2007-2008 school year. The following courses will be completely new:

- Grade 8 English Language Arts
- Grade 10 Art (20G)
- Grade 10 Drafting (20G)
- Grade 10 Retailing (20G)

The following existing courses are undergoing significant revision:

- Grade 9 Science (10F)
- Grade 10 Science (20F)
- Grade 11 English Language Arts: Literary Focus (30S)
- Grade 11 Pre-Calculus Mathematics (30S)
- Grade 12 English Language Arts: Language and Technical Communication (40S)

A number of other courses are under development and will be released at a later date.



recording, electronic communications, and computerized record keeping, are included whenever possible to balance various learning styles and to actively engage students.

After release, each course undergoes a field validation process lasting at least one year. During this time, feedback is collected from learners and educators, and improvements are made. Even after the field validation is complete and "final" versions are released, major and minor revisions continue to be made to fine tune and update courses.

ISO Courses as Resources for Classroom Teachers

ISO courses are very useful resources for classroom teachers. Course materials provide background information and ideas for learning activities, assignments, and assessments. Individual lessons can be given to learners who have missed classes or need remediation. Many courses include self-correcting exercises or learning activities complete with answer keys, which teachers can use to help learners review or practise what they have learned.

ISO courses are made available to teachers in several different ways. Some newly released courses are distributed in a bulk mailing to schools. Courses are also available at all university education faculty libraries, as well as the Instructional Resources Unit library at 1181 Portage Avenue in Winnipeg. Teachers can also purchase copies directly from the ISO office in Winkler.

For More Information

To obtain more information, students attending schools can contact their school's ISO facilitator. (ISO facilitators are educators designated by their schools to assist independent learners.)

For more information on purchasing a course or registering in one, contact the Independent Study Option at 1-800-465-9915 or visit their website at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/iso>. For up-to-date information on the release of new ISO courses, subscribe to the biweekly K–12 Website Updates at <www3.edu.gov.mb.ca/ss/user>.

For information on course development, contact

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The Manitoba Education Research Network (MERN) supports teaching and learning in Manitoba's schools by creating opportunities for partnership research projects and dissemination activities.

If you would like to receive information on upcoming research forums and activities, email <valerie.sawchuk@gov.mb.ca>.

MERN
Manitoba Education Research Network

The Bureau de l'éducation française Division

presents

French Immersion Conference 2007–2008

December 3, 2007*
Canad Inn Regent
1415 Regent Avenue West

For superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, vice-principals, trustees, language coordinators

Come and discover the new handbook for French Immersion administrators and explore topics such as

- providing school leadership
- working with parents
- recruitment and retention
- staffing
- inclusion

The conference will be held in English

For more information, please contact Sandra Drzystek from the Bureau de l'éducation française Division at 204-945-6939.

Conference program will be available in early September at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/proflearn/fr_imm_conf.html

* Those who wish to receive 10 hours of credit toward the School Administrator's Certificate are required to participate in additional workshops on December 4, 2007.

Award for Resource Sharing

The Special Materials Services of the Blind/Visually Impaired Services Unit, as a member of the Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres for Alternate Format Materials (CAER), is a recipient of the CLA/ OCLC Canada Award for Resource Sharing Achievement.

Special Materials Services (SMS) has been serving schools in Manitoba for 30 years, delivering and producing alternate format books for students who are print disabled. The work of SMS and other provincial organizations has been recognized nationally by the Canadian Library Association (CLA) and the Online Computer Library Centre (OCLC). CLA presented the Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres for Alternate Format Materials, of which SMS is a member, with the award at the CLA national conference on May 25, 2007, in Newfoundland.

Special Materials Services provides books in audio (MP3-CD and cassette), large print, Braille, and electronic text to students in all funded schools in Manitoba. This service includes a partnership with Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre. Through CAER, Special Materials Services is linked to production and circulation centres in Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, and the Atlantic provinces. This service is provided for students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 and in post-secondary institutions. A database in Ottawa links all of the alternate format resources to create a virtual library of approximately 70000 titles in formats that can be customized for specific student use.

Recently these services have become part of a new unit called Media Production Services where all nonprint production will be coordinated.

If you have a student in your class who is print disabled (physically, cognitively, or visually impaired) and requires alternate format textbooks, please phone 945-7842 or visit our website at <http://smscat.merlin.mb.ca>.

For more information, contact:

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Supporting Education for Sustainable Development

More and more teachers, schools, and school divisions are realizing the importance of promoting sustainable living with their students.

Education for sustainable development (ESD) is a priority for Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, as demonstrated by the initiatives outlined below, which would not be possible without key partners such as Manitoba Hydro, Learning for a Sustainable Future, and the International Institute for Sustainable Development.

Ongoing Grants

- School divisions receive an annual ESD grant of $700 per school to be used to support individual school- or division-based projects that promote sustainability education.
- Upon application, up to $2000 is available via a partnership between the Department and Manitoba Hydro for projects that promote sustainable development.

New Resources

- A colourful ESD poster containing a Student Declaration for Sustainable Living has been produced for Grades 5 to 12 students. A Kindergarten to Grade 4 version of the poster will soon be released.
- Parent brochures are being developed, highlighting the sustainable development outcomes and underlying themes in various curricula at each grade. This will show parents how sustainability education is being addressed through the school curriculum and allow parents to make real-world connections to classroom learning.
- Learning resources to support teachers in the integration of ESD into Kindergarten to Grade 12 classrooms have been identified.

Professional Learning

- During the 2006–2007 school year, many schools and school divisions took the opportunity to motivate and engage staff in the area of ESD through one-hour presentations offered by the Department. In addition, ESD sessions targeted at Kindergarten to Grade 4 teachers and Grades 5 to 8 teachers were offered as part of the Department's annual Summer Institute. ESD sessions continue to be available, on request, throughout this school year.
- The Department is looking for teachers who are doing innovative projects with their students to participate in an ESD professional learning community to share their work and mentor others.

For more information and to keep updated on events for the coming year, visit the ESD website at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd/>.

Teachers, schools, or school divisions interested in participating in ESD professional learning, please contact

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MERN
Manitoba Education Research Network
www.mern.ca
Connecting research in education to policy and practice

Research Profile

Reading is a "Girl Thing"—NOT!

Does having a male reading teacher increase boys' reading performance? How about bringing more technology to the classroom? What about giving boys a choice in their reading materials?

These are the strategies that were investigated by Laura Sokal, her research partner Herb Katz, and her 18 student research assistants at the University of Winnipeg. They worked with 180 struggling male readers in Grades 3 and 4 for 20 weeks each year over a two-year period. The project, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, examined whether changing boys' experiences with reading could change their reading performance, their self-perceptions as readers, or their view that reading is feminine. What they found may surprise you.

Despite claims that boys are behind girls in reading, we all know some boys who read very well and some girls who struggle with reading. Furthermore, boys who struggle with reading do so for a variety of reasons—they may have learning disabilities, may find the sedentary nature of reading boring, or may simply prefer other activities. One of the main reasons that people think some boys do not excel at reading is that the boys view reading as feminine. Hence, they have proposed "boy-friendly" strategies such as those mentioned at the beginning of this article in order to "masculinize" reading. Do they work? In short, the answer is yes and no. The project showed that addressing boys' reading needs is a complex process. Sokal's research produced several findings:

- The gender of the reading teacher makes no difference to boys' reading performance or to their view that reading is feminine.
- The use of computer-based books makes no difference to boys' reading performance or to their self-perceptions as readers.
- Choice of reading material is not associated with greater gains in boys' reading performance, their self-perceptions, or their view that reading is feminine as long as the texts are interesting to the boys.
- Boys who read from computers with male reading teachers but not with female reading teachers decrease their view that reading is feminine.
- Boys who read with female reading teachers are more likely to develop positive self-perceptions as readers than boys who read with male teachers.
- Only 24% of Grade 2 typical male readers and 9% of Grades 3 and 4 struggling male readers view reading as feminine, suggesting that gender-based interventions will only work with a minority of struggling readers.

The project showed that addressing boys' reading needs is a complex process.

Sokal is now conducting a three-year research project in northern Manitoba schools in partnership with other University of Winnipeg researchers, the Aboriginal Education Directorate, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, University College of the North, and Mystery Lake School District. This project, funded by the Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network, is looking at the effects of working with families to disseminate "best reading practices" in homes and schools of Grades 1 and 2 boys and girls.

Sokal views her research as having three important benefits. First, she has the privilege of working with pre-service teachers and in-service teachers as part of a skilled team who investigate ways to help children achieve in school. Second, her student research assistants provide real assistance to students and teachers by working with the boys each week in the schools. Third, all books used in the research are left in the classrooms. Sokal and her team have donated over $16,000 in books to Manitoba schools over the course of several research projects.

For further information, contact

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Profile

Dr. Sokal is an associate professor at the University of Winnipeg. She completed her B.Ed., M.Ed., and Ph.D. and Certificate in Higher Education Teaching at the University of Manitoba.

Dr. Sokal's research interests include risk and resilience in children, and gender development in boys and its implications for school outcomes. In 2004, she was presented with the Clifford J. Robson Memorial Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Laura has been invited to take a one-year sabbatical as a visiting scholar to James Cook University in Australia in 2008. While there, she will be studying their national curriculum, which is aimed at addressing boys' learning needs. When she returns to Canada, Laura will take up the duties of her new role as Associate Dean of Education at the University of Winnipeg.

Arts Education Transforming Learning in an Inner City School

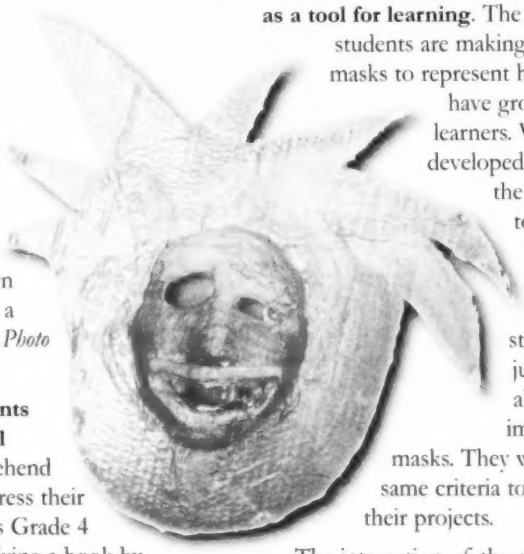
By Rhian Brynjolson, Wellington School
Winnipeg School Division

As an "art and integrated curriculum" teacher in an inner city elementary school, I have the privilege of regularly collaborating with some very talented classroom teachers, specialists, artists, and students. Together, we have developed many exciting projects that enable students to explore curricula in ways that make sense to them.

In this **collaborative setting**, we develop projects within the community. The Grade 1 students in Ms. Sigurdson's class, for example, explored their neighbourhood on a community walk, where they would stop, point, explain why they thought an item was important, and snap a picture. The photographs, of items such as sparrows, play structures, and fire hydrants, gave us a child's-eye view of the community.

Our staff is learning to trust our students' abilities as **problem solvers**. Last year, Mr. Daeninck's Grade 6 class learned how to make a video on citizenship. They began with students' observations and questions about how advertisements are made and ended with a snappy video put together by teams of student writers, actors, and camera operators each contributing a segment.

Student autonomy is evident in our projects. Students in Mrs. Bukta's Grade 4 class are working on animation projects to show how igneous rock is formed. A group of students is responsible for setting up the tripod, operating the digital camera, and teaching other students how to manipulate the Plasticine "lava" flows. Students will edit their own work and record a voice-over using *Photo Story 3* software.



Art allows **students with exceptional needs** to comprehend material and express their ideas. Mr. Nault's Grade 4 students are studying a book by working with a dancer to develop movements and by building masks and props in our art studio. The ownership of the process, the repetition of the ideas involved in practising their play, and the variety of modalities being exercised will enable all of the students to grasp the concepts and remember what they have learned.

The arts **engage students in learning**. We were about halfway through the task of building a life-sized whale in our school library, and I wondered if any of the students in Ms. Derewianchuk's Grade 3 class remembered why we were doing it. When I asked one student she replied, "Because it's amazing!" Oh. Right.

Students are learning to use **assessment as a tool for learning**. The Grade 6 students are making plaster masks to represent how they have grown as learners. We developed and revised the criteria together as the project evolved, helping students make judgments about how to improve their masks. They will use these same criteria to self-assess their projects.

The integration of the arts with other curricula at Wellington School facilitates a **constructivist approach** to learning. Piaget's belief that "children don't get ideas, they make them" is realized as children wonder about, discuss, and build their own understandings of the world. By respecting our students as learners, and through planning, integration, and collaboration within our educational community, we transform student learning with unforgettable arts-based experiences.

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The newsletter includes articles from the education community and from Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. Signed articles appearing in this magazine express the views of their authors and not necessarily those of the Department.

Distribution:

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A similar document has been developed by the Bureau de l'éducation française Division for the Français and the French Immersion Programs.

Contact Information:

We invite contributions to *Education Manitoba*. When forwarding submissions, please include your name and telephone number, and send materials in print and electronic formats to:

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